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RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1911
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2430
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000497

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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: NEXT STEPS IN U.S.-TURKISH DIALOGUE

REF: A. SECSTATE 07210

[1](#)B. ASHGABAT 0161

[1](#)C. ASHGABAT 0330

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

[1](#)2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Following working-level meetings with counterparts at the Turkish International Development Agency (TIKA), USAID requested meetings on April 16-17 with two Deputy Ministers of Health and Medical Industry to identify possible joint USAID-TIKA cooperation activities in Turkmenistan. In positive and productive meetings with two deputy ministers, avian influenza and maternal and child health were identified as areas of potential cooperation. As a next step, Deputy Minister Orazov said he would submit a request to TIKA for avian influenza laboratory training in Turkey for Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MOHMI) staff. Following a separate meeting with Deputy Minister Kurban Elyasov on April 17, TIKA and USAID partner ZdravPlus agreed to meet with the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Institute to determine specific parameters for joint activities. END SUMMARY.

MINISTRY RECEPTIVE TO PREMISE OF JOINT USAID-TIKA PROGRAMS

[1](#)3. (SBU) As agreed in an April 3 working meeting between USAID and Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) staff in Turkmenistan, USAID submitted a letter to the MOHMI proposing joint a meeting between USAID's deputy ministerial counterparts, USAID and TIKA to discuss potential cooperation with the MOHMI. The Ministry was receptive and initially agreed to a meeting on April 15. Due to conflicts in scheduling both deputy ministers at the same time, however, separate meetings were arranged on April 16 and 17.

PREVENTING AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)

[1](#)4. (U) On April 16, Deputy Minister for Sanitary and Epidemiological Service (SES) Orazov indicated that the idea for establishing a laboratory to monitor avian influenza was his. Although WHO experts had advised that one national laboratory was preferable, Orazov still believed that a lab in Turkmenbashi was

very much needed, especially due to the planned development of the Caspian coast via the Avaza tourist project. In the meantime, support with publishing informational materials on avian influenza for the general population was very much needed. Schools and schoolchildren were potential target recipients of a needed informational campaign.

15. (U) TIKa offered to organize a one-month training program in Turkey for veterinarians and/or laboratory specialists. Three to four participants would be sent to Turkey for training and viewing Turkey's laboratory set-up. After that, TIKa was prepared to send specialist(s) to Turkmenistan to assess the laboratory's equipment needs, which TIKa would consider funding. Pleased with the potential new resources, Deputy Minister Orazov stated that the Ministry would submit a written request for this support to TIKa.

MALARIA COOPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN BORDER ZONES?

16. (U) Before closing, Orazov inquired about potential USG financial support for malaria programs. Although Turkmenistan is striving to be declared a malaria free country, Orazov has remained a vocal proponent of continuing Turkmenistan's fight against malaria. He saw a risk in people traveling from Turkmenistan's northeastern province of Lebap into Afghanistan, where they become infected with malaria and bring it back when they return to Turkmenistan. Orazov asked for USG resources to help construct a 100 km malaria free zone along Turkmenistan's border with Afghanistan. (NOTE: On April 18 at the Country Coordination Mechanism for malaria, this request was repeated. The MOHMI also asked for USAID's assistance in organizing a malaria prevention meeting with health officials from Afghanistan. END NOTE.)

SUPPORTING FAMILY MEDICINE TRAINING

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17. (U) On April 17, representatives from USAID, USAID's principal health reform program, ZdravPlus, and TIKa met with Deputy Minister Kurban Elyasov. Elyasov praised USAID's ongoing cooperation with the MOHMI and said that his biggest challenge was training staff. In response to a question about possible equipment needs for MCH programs, Elyasov said that incubators for the Central Hospital or MCH Institute, as well as high-quality microscopes, would be welcomed. TIKa inquired about the specifications and was advised that they could be obtained from local representatives of international firms.

18. (U) Noting that it had previously sent doctors to Turkey for training, TIKa also offered to organize one- or two-month training programs in Turkey for MCH and/or laboratory specialists. MOHMI Department Head Beglich Ovezglychov said that equipment for MCH Institute, training in Turkey, laboratory training and microscopes were all priorities. TIKa agreed to consult with Ankara on the range of possibilities, but considered a training program to be the probable first step. With the Deputy Minister's permission -- USAID Country Representative proposed a meeting between ZdravPlus, TIKa and the MCH Institute's director in Ashgabat to further discuss how such cooperation might work. Deputy Minister Elyasov gave his full blessing to the proposed approach and asked that the parties proceed accordingly, while reporting to Mr. Ovezglychov. The parties agreed that the initial meeting with MCH Institute would take place during the week of April 21.

19. (SBU) COMMENT: Both deputy ministers began by sharing their appreciation for the Ministry's long-standing constructive relationship with USAID. Based on this, they welcomed the proposals for joint activities involving TIKa. As the next step, post awaits a request for joint activities from MOHMI to TIKa on avian influenza laboratory training in Turkey. USAID and TIKa will prepare a joint proposal on MCH activities after it meets with the MCH Institute director next week.

110. (U) COMMENT CONTINUED: At this point, the MCH activities under consideration are closer to the joint activities originally envisioned in RefTel A. That said, even if the avian influenza lab trainings take place as a stand-alone effort, USAID's introduction

of TIKa to MOHMI has achieved a related goal of widening TIKa's involvement in donor efforts and will have attracted additional resources for Turkmenistan's health sector. Additional opportunities for USAID cooperation with TIKa in the agricultural sector will be pursued in upcoming meetings planned with USAID, TIKa and USAID's partner, Winrock International. END COMMENT.

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